

**EDOLPHUS "ED" TOWNS**MEMBER OF CONGRESS  
10TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK**ENERGY AND COMMERCE**

HEALTH

TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND  
THE INTERNETCOMMERCE, TRADE, AND  
CONSUMER PROTECTION**GOVERNMENT REFORM**GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY AND  
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT  
RANKING MEMBER**Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-3210**

July 8, 2004

Michael K. Powell  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

**MB Docket No. 04-207**

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am writing to urge you to not support the "a la carte" cable system currently being debated in Congress. Its implementation would reduce or eliminate programming aimed at minority groups.

Channels like BET, Telemundo, TV One and ESPN Deportes have succeeded under the current cable system in large part due to the way in which they were introduced: through bundling. When a new network is introduced, it is usually placed in a bundle with existing ad-supported popular channels, such as CNN, ESPN or Nickelodeon, allowing viewers the opportunity to try out the new channel. If consumers find the channels interesting, the channel will gain its own audience and enough advertising revenue to become profitable.

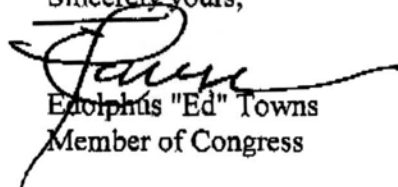
Under the "a la carte" system, where viewers pay separately for each channel, there is little likelihood that consumers will spend their money on channels about which they have little knowledge. A new network will have no opportunity to build an audience and become successful. This will also result in higher expenses for channels that remain.

Thus, the channels that appeal to more specialized audiences, particularly ethnic, foreign-language and niche programming, would have trouble attracting enough subscribers to survive. Ultimately, this situation would result in generic and low quality programming aimed at the majority. The minority voice would be silenced in the "a la carte" system.

As a senior member of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, I implore you to reject the "a la carte" system and urge you to keep diverse programming on the air.

With warmest wishes, I remain

Sincerely yours,



Edolphus "Ed" Towns  
Member of Congress

## WASHINGTON OFFICE:

SUITE 2232  
RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-5936

## BROOKLYN OFFICES:

26 COURT ST., SUITE 1510  
BROOKLYN, NY 11242  
(718) 865-80181110 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE  
STORE 5BROOKLYN, NY 11207  
(718) 272-11751670 FULTON STREET  
BROOKLYN, NY 11213  
(718) 774-56822294 NOSTRAND AVENUE  
BROOKLYN, NY 11203  
(718) 434-7931